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Minutes for the Faculty Affairs Committee of the Academic Senate

November 21, 2013

St. Mary's 113B

In Attendance: Linda Hartley (chair), Eric Taglieri, Katie Willard, Carissa Krane, Harry Gerla, Emily Hicks, Ralph Frasca, Jamie Ervin, Joe Watras, Kurt Mosser, Tony Saliba, Yong Song, and Patrick Donnelly

Absent: Paul McGreal, Shawn Cassiman, and Abdullah Alghafis

Meeting called to order at 12:01 by Linda Hartley

Previous Minutes. The minutes from the FAC meeting on October 17 were briefly discussed and approved. With regard to the minutes from November 7, a few spelling errors and unclear wording concerning faculty being able to decline dissemination of SET data were corrected. These minutes were then approved.

Announcements. Announcements of the next FAC meeting on December 5 and the next Senate meeting on December 13 were made.

Intellectual Property Issue. It was stated that M. Willenbrink had more suggested revisions. Status on this issue will be discussed at the next meeting on December 5.

Issue of Research Professor Title. The revised document concerning the Research Professor title (submitted by J. Weber with edits by LH/PD) was discussed. There was concern with the use of the word "professor" as part of a title because "professor" is really a rank, not a title. The revised document replaced "research professor" with "research faculty." Wording concerning the Distinguished Research Professor were stricken from the latest version of the document. There was a general consensus on these items. In addition, there was discussion on whether a sentence should be added stating that this is not a staff position. With regard to the minimum qualifications for a Research Faculty position, the issue of a terminal MS degree was raised. For the Civil Engineering Department in the SOE, a terminal MS degree would be acceptable for a Research Faculty. This practice occurs at other universities. As a part of the minimum qualifications, there was general consensus that the terminal degree (MS vs. PhD) would depend on the units. LH will send the latest version of the document to other units for comments and then forward responses to the FAC.

SET. The following is a list of Senate questions that were to be addressed at the FAC meeting together with associated discussion:

- How will the results of the new online SET process be applied or used?

Not explicitly answered. However, this is an overarching question that is related to the questions below.

- What aspects of the results will be used by administrators to make decisions?
 - who sees the written comments;
 - are the written comments to be used for summative purposes, etc.?

Student evaluations are currently used for both summative and formative purposes. The use of written comments by students for summative purposes varies among the units. It was suggested to edit the document to say "The results would be used for formative and summative purposes following currently accepted unit practices."

- How will the results of the new online SET process be reported?

There was general consensus that the results would be disseminated electronically as is done now. There was discussion concerning the use of student averages alone. The use of standard deviations together with average values would be more meaningful. There was general consensus that the results of the new online SET process should be reported in the context of current unit policy and procedures.

- What kind of data will be generated and in what forms/formats?

There was agreement that "...the instrument has changed, but the method of reporting would continue status quo."

It was recommended that Set evaluation data may be useful for accreditation or other institutional evaluation purposes not linked to individual faculty. It is believed that data on the nature of the questions and their assessment could be used for research. However, there could be privacy issues. Policies and associated processes need to be established on how and what kind of reports can be generated.

- Who will see what information?

There are privacy issues involved with data access. Thus, reasonable care has to be taken with handling the data. Chairs, Deans, P&T committees, and will be able to see the evaluation data. They currently see it now for individuals.

- How will this new policy be implemented (i.e., tenure, non-tenure)?

Some on the FAC felt that faculty in the later years of the tenure track process might have an option to use a combination of both the old and new evaluation methods. There was additional discussion that tenure track faculty in the first 3 years should be treated one way, while those in years 4 and 5 should be treated differently. It was stated that having different sets of people being evaluated differently could be a logistics nightmare. An outside consultant recommended that everyone switch to the new evaluation procedure at the same time because department averages would then be available for everyone.

- How do the potentially new policies fit with the current policies regarding pre- and post-tenure review of faculty members?

No time for discussion of this question.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Ervin